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ABSTRACT

Education reform based on technical and rational processes often short-circuits reform because it is uncontentious, abstract, and provides educators with no legitimate ways to question the marketplace values and policies that drive much contemporary school reform. The perspective referred to as "betterment" is an alternative reform that stresses the importance of civic virtue as exemplified by Jefferson, Lincoln, Jane Addams, and Martin Luther King, Jr. The book describes the experiences of 16 schools in 5 states that participated in the Carnegie Corporation's "Turning Points" reform of middle-grades schooling. The analysis uses longitudinal, comparative case-study research. Improvement occurred when schools acted on the democratic, caring, and socially just values of citizenship through civic interaction, which enables students to achieve a deeper understanding of subject matter through problem-based assignments. (DFR)

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